



# MFO January Newsletter

2026



## Happy New Year

Dear Families,

Happy New Year! We hope 2026 is a blessed year filled with health, hope, love and new fond memories.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

### Welcome 2026

We welcome all the possibilities a new year brings.

On behalf of the MFO staff, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you a joyful New Year. We hope that your Christmas break was restful, rewarding and filled with the richness of family activities and the gift of family time.



During the month of January, we will embrace the dreams we hold and the promises we will make to ourselves and one another as we continue to build and embrace a school culture that celebrates the gift and talents of our students, staff, and the school community.

At MFO, we have spirit and we are inspired each day to reach out for all we can imagine. We are a school that believes in...

**"Every Child, Every Day, No Exceptions"**

We continue to recognize the presence of God in our daily lives, embracing our faith and modeling our beliefs and values as we continue to care for one another here at MFO. In the faces of our children, we recognize the presence of God. We see each student as a precious gift. We will let our light shine, and collectively we will continue to serve God through acts of kindness and service that enrich our community and involve our children in the spirit of giving.

May God bless you with health and happiness.

Principal, Liliana (Lily) Kucy; Assistant Principals, Robert Madunicky; David Kiryluk



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## RITE OF THE CLOSING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIVISION

The Holy Father, in the bull *Spes non confundit*, has decreed that the Jubilee Year will close on Sunday, December 28th, 2025, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The division will be closing the Jubilee Year on the week of Monday, January the 5th, the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. As a faith community we will gather in prayer to celebrate the conclusion of the Jubilee Year. Through the sacraments, pilgrimage, prayer and charity we have had an intense experience of the divine mercy: the Lord has washed away our sins and filled us with his grace. Now, strengthened by the experience of conversion, we will go back to the daily routine of our lives. Like the disciples who saw his face, we shall hold on to joy as ***pilgrims of hope*** and firmly maintain the profession of our faith.

## DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

### ADVENT CELEBRATION



DEACON GORDON



Grade 1 Readers



MFO STUDENTS

### SCHOOL WIDE CELEBRATION

We gathered as a school community for our Advent celebration, a beautiful time of prayer and reflection. We extend our gratitude to the grade 1 Liturgical Advent team (Mrs. Melnick, Mrs. Magleo and Mrs. Pierce) who prepared a kickoff celebration in the gymnasium which touched upon the wonder and glory of the Holy Season. We were blessed to have Deacon Gordon from St. Thomas More Parish as our celebrant. He shared a meaningful message about the significance of the first candle of Advent, reminding us of the hope it represents. We would also like to thank our grade 6 students who supported our grade 1 students with their readings.

Our theme book, "What the Road Said," served as a unifying anchor text, that invited our students to look at social justice initiatives by reflecting on what it means to walk a path of kindness, and empathy.

Our students participated reverently and did exceptionally well throughout the celebration, making it a truly special experience for all. As we continued our Advent journey, we were called to prepare for the birth of Jesus by staying awake and opening our hearts to His presence, so that we welcomed Jesus with faith and love.

Overall, it was a beautiful and reflective celebration as we waited for the miraculous birth of Jesus, the light of the world.

May all of us continue to lead daily, by example, and proclaim the word of the Lord through lived action.



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## MFO SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES~THANK YOU TO OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY



## SIGNIFICANT SERVICE IN ACTION PROJECTS

December was truly a month of service and joy at our school! Our community was buzzing with three remarkable "Service in Action" initiatives that brought our faith and values to life. We began with an inspiring kickoff led by our Junior High Leadership students, who connected these initiatives to our Book of the Year, "What the Road Said," reminding us that every act of kindness and empathy paves the way for hope. The 'road' that is traveled is defined not only by reflection and intention, but also by meaningful action. From there, students and families came together in generosity and compassion, demonstrating what it means to serve others with love. These initiatives not only strengthened our sense of belonging but also reflect the heart of our mission which is living out the Gospel through service. We thank our families in our school community for making an impact and difference in our city.

## BETHLEHEM TOY EXPRESS

The Bethlehem Toy Express was an outstanding success! Families came together in a spirit of generosity to purchase toys for students in another school who might not otherwise receive a gift this Christmas. Witnessing our community unite in such a meaningful way truly filled our hearts with joy, hope, and love. The atmosphere was reminiscent of Santa's workshop, brimming with compassion and the true essence of the Christmas season. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this initiative a beautiful expression of service and solidarity.



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### MITTEN, TOQUE, HAT & SCARF TREE

Another Christmas Project our students participated in touched many lives in need. Our mittens, toques, and scarves initiative brought smiles to our school community and beyond. The school placed two Christmas trees in the atrium. Students brought in the above items and placed them on the tree to support children during the winter season. We would like to express our gratitude once again to our school community for their generosity and donations that brightened many families throughout the Christmas season.





## FOOD DRIVE

Our December Food Drive was nothing short of extraordinary! Every classroom participated and demonstrated incredible generosity, contributing an incredible volume of non perishable food items to support the Edmonton Food Bank. At a time when food insecurity is affecting more families in our city than ever before, this initiative reflects the deep commitment from our school community. The impact was significant! The food donations were delivered ensuring that families in need received essential support during this season of giving. We extend a heartfelt gratitude to our students, families, and staff for making this effort such a resounding success and for making a difference in the lives of others. We would also like to thank Mr. Kiryluk and the junior high student leadership team who planned and organized this initiative!



**Junior High Leadership  
Students**



**Food Collection...**



**On Its Way**

## JUNIOR HIGH ATHLETICS



PASSING



SETTING



DEFENSE



## JUNIOR GIRLS AND BOYS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

We are incredibly proud of our Otters for an amazing, though short, season. Both the junior boys and girls teams displayed exceptional talent and skills well beyond the junior level, making it extremely exciting to watch. What stood out the most was the incredible camaraderie among players as they celebrated each other's successes on the court. The students demonstrated true teamwork and sportsmanship.

Also, a thank you to our dedicated Junior High students who volunteered as scorekeepers and line judges, ensuring our games ran smoothly. Finally, a big thank you to all the students who came out to cheer and support their fellow athletes. Their enthusiasm and school spirit made every game special.

We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful and caring students.

Lastly, We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the incredible coaches (Mrs. Kalman, Mr. Banco and Mrs. RJ) who dedicated their time, energy, and expertise to support our students.

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## GLEE CLUB

### CAROLING

This December, Mr. Obrest's talented Glee Club truly shone as they brought joy and the festive Christmas spirit to our local community. From their heartwarming performances at the airport to their inspiring performance at the Legislature, the students shared music that lifted spirits and celebrated the Advent season. Their voices and enthusiasm reminded us all of the power of art to unite and uplift.

We also want to express our **gratitude** to Mr. Oberst and every member of the Glee Club for the countless hours of rehearsals and preparation that made these performances possible. The dedication, teamwork, and passion for music are evident in every Glee performance. We thank the students and Mr. Oberst for making this season a memorable one.



**Glee Club**



**Amazing Acoustics**



**Thank You Mr. O**

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## KINDERGARTEN CONCERT

### MS KELLY & MRS. ECKFORD

The Kindergarten students truly stole the spotlight during their delightful Christmas performance on Wednesday, December 17. Both Ms Kelly's and Mrs. Eckford's morning programs charmed our families at 11:00 a.m., followed by Ms Kelly's afternoon class at 2:30 p.m. With a festive spirit, the children filled the room with warmth, creating a memorable celebration. Their enthusiasm and authenticity brought smiles to every face, making this special moment a highlight of our Advent journey.



**Kindergarten Concert**



**Christmas Attire**



**Festive Spirit**

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## HEALTHY HUNGER PARENT HELPERS

### WONDERFUL PARENT HELPERS

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the wonderful parent volunteers who assist with our Healthy Hunger Hot Lunch program each month. Their dedication ensures that each hot lunch is delivered to classrooms promptly, allowing students to enjoy their meals.

We are truly blessed to have such a strong and supportive parent community. Their efforts make a significant difference in the smooth operation of this lunch program, and we deeply appreciate the time and care they give to our school community.



## 10 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



**Ms Harbin**



**Junior High Band  
Students**



**Pancake Breakfast**

### MFO SPIRIT

Students and staff embraced the month of December through our “10 Days of Christmas Spirit Cheer.” From festive Christmas sweaters, paraphernalia, and hats to fun trivia challenges, the enthusiasm and creativity displayed each day brought warmth and joy to our school. The administrative team had a great deal of fun during the month of December by visiting classrooms and observing students dressed in the spirit of Christmas. All students participated in the Christmas Countdown.

Our 10 Days of Christmas Fun even included a special performance by Mrs. Harbin's junior high band students, who joyfully played Christmas carols for our elementary students. Ms. De Borja also had her elementary students perform for the staff!

Adding to the Christmas excitement students joyfully took on the role of judges as they voted for the most creative staff made gingerbread houses which filled the tables in the atrium with a festive spirit.

Thursday morning, our elementary students participated in a series of traveling Christmas stations spread across the school. Each station offered a joyful, hands on activity that invited students to explore, and celebrate the Christmas season together. The energy in the halls was wonderful as students moved from one festive experience to the next, making it a memorable part of their Christmas celebrations.

These activities truly reflected the sense of belonging and celebration that defines our Otter identity.



Reader's Theatre



Caroling in the School



Christmas Spirit



Traveling Christmas Stations



Creating



Fun, Fun, Fun

## JUNIOR HIGH ENCORE

### CHRISTMAS ENCORE SESSIONS

Our junior high students also participated in a series of ENCORE sessions designed to cultivate engagement and deepen their appreciation of the Christmas season. Through thoughtfully planned activities, students demonstrated enthusiasm, collaboration, and a genuine sense of Christmas spirit.

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST



CHRISTMAS...



CHEER



JOY

## SANTA'S BREAKFAST

This year's Santa' breakfast at MFO was truly magical for all students. The School Advisory Council/Parent Fundraising Association planned and organized an AMAZING morning. We extend our deepest gratitude to our School Advisory Council (SAC) chair, Chris Bullen, for planning and organizing this event and the Parent Fundraising Association (PFA), for subsidizing the pancake breakfast, and the many parent volunteers who made our Santa's Breakfast an unforgettable celebration. On the last day before Christmas Break, volunteers generously gave their time and talents to prepare and serve pancakes for over 800 students which was a remarkable act of community spirit!



Adding to the joy, Santa himself paid a special visit, and our Junior High band filled the gymnasium with beautiful Christmas carols throughout the morning. It was truly a day of cheer, goodwill, and festive spirit that brought our school community together in a meaningful way. Thank you for making this tradition so special for our students! They recognized how great we think they are and that they truly are at the center of our commitment. We had a wonderful morning filled with friendship, music, fun and wonderful, tasty pancakes.



YUMMY



DELICIOUS



PANCAKES

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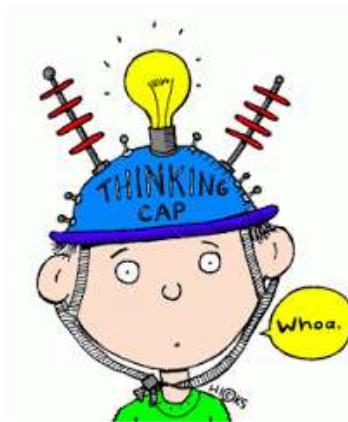
## JANUARY EVENTS

### INQUIRING MINDS

Beginning in January, our school will highlight one learner attribute each month to help students reflect on who they are becoming as learners and leaders. For January, we invite all students to focus on what it means to be an Inquirer. This means that we nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

We will be on the lookout for inquirer traits in our students this month and they are invited to share their success stories. Inquiry is a circular process that starts with a question requiring students to:

- think critically, creatively and reflectively
- build on prior knowledge
- research and gather information, independently
- analyze their findings and those of others



- interpret data
- learn from others
- create new understandings
- understand there may be more than one answer, and this may change as their understanding grows
- present and communicate their findings, explaining their learning
- refine their finding and start the process again



Hello January



Welcome January



January Activities

## JANUARY 5 CLASSESS RESUME

## JANUARY 6 EPIPHANY CELEBRATION

### EPIPHANY CELEBRATION

Our online schoolwide Epiphany Celebration will take place on Tuesday, January 6 at 8:20 am for the Wondrous Gift of Epiphany. During the Christmas season, we celebrate with our families and friends with the giving and receiving of various gifts. The Gift of the Epiphany is a celebration of the time when the three kings, or Magi, visited infant Jesus in Bethlehem. This extraordinary gift calls us to open our hearts and minds to God through his son, Jesus.



## JANUARY 9 GRADE 6 STUDENTS ARE AT THE ART GALLERY (FIELD TRIP)

### SLEIGH RIDES

We are excited to share that our students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will enjoy a full day of festive sleigh rides around the school grounds. This special experience will include a team of horses pulling the sleighs, creating a winter wonderland atmosphere for our students to celebrate

the season. To make the day even more memorable, we will be serving **hot chocolate and marshmallows** for all students as they enjoy this winter activity. Families are warmly invited to join us during the day to take photos of your children and share in the joy of this event. Further details will be shared as soon as we are able to confirm appropriate conditions, given that plans are contingent upon inclement weather considerations

More information to follow in January

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## JANUARY 13 SAC/PFA MEETING

### SCHOOL ADVISORY/PARENT FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION

The next MFO School Advisory Council/Parent Fundraising Association Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, January 13** at **6:30 pm** in the staffroom. In assuring parents have a voice, all stakeholders from the MFO school community are welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.



#### 2025/2026 School Advisory Council/Parent Fundraising Association Members

CHAIR: Chris Bullen

PARENT FUNDRAISER PRESIDENT: Charles Mangwende

SECRETARY: Kimberly Moore

TREASURER: Heather Gratix

CASINO CHAIR: Tara Heisler

DIRECTORS AT LARGE: Tim McMullen and Simona Shropshire

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## JANUARY 16 HOT LUNCH

### Healthy Hunger Hot Lunch

#### January Lunch Dates:

Friday, January 16 - SUBWAY

DEADLINE TO ORDER (SUNDAY, JANUARY 11)



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## JANUARY 21 GRADES 4-6 STUDENTS ARE AT SNOW VALLEY (FIELD TRIP)

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# JANUARY 23 SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY~ FRIDAY, JANUARY 23

Please note that Friday, January 23 is a scheduled Professional Development (PD) Day for staff. There will be **no classes for students** on this day ( no school for all K-8 students).

Our team will be engaging in collaborative learning and planning to continue enhancing student success. Thank you for your continued support!



## MARCH OPEN HOUSE

### (KINDERGARTEN/ JUNIOR HIGH) OPEN HOUSE SAVE THE DATE



MARCH 12



MARCH 12



MARCH 12



**Smore**

Beautiful class updates in a snap

